

# THE LIFE LEVELS

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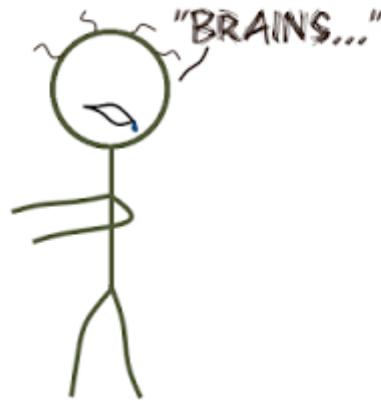
It's a remarkable thing to be alive, to make choices by our own will, to decide on a course of action and see it take form. To hold a piece of paper, and then choose to crumple it, and watch that happen. To have a thought, and then choose to type that thought into a computer, and see it forever recorded in writing. We often take it for granted, but it's really constantly amazing to be able to make choices, to decide what we want, and then to shape our surroundings according to what we desire. This is intelligence: the ability to do whatever's best, in any situation, by turning will into reality.

And on the Fifth Gear, greater intelligence is not only better able to shape the world according to its desires, but also has better desires in the first place. While all intelligent beings desire "happiness" of a sort, some short-term desires are more effective than others in making that happiness into reality. A higher quantum of intelligence on the Fifth Gear, a higher Life Level, defines happiness itself in new, more effective, stronger and happier ways. This changes all shorter-term desires, and changes the very nature of a person. As the Fifth Gear turns, life itself changes.

## Life Level 0 – Savagery

# LIFE LEVEL 0

## Savagery



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So let's start at the very bottom, with the lowest form of the pursuit of happiness, which can hardly even be called intelligence. This is IL 0 applied to the Fifth Gear, or Life Level 0.

Remember, IL 0 is almost the lack of any intelligence at all. IL 0 does not recognize and respond to things, but simply reacts, as even inanimate objects do. If you hit a ball, it'll go flying, but that doesn't require any real intention or intelligence on the part of the ball. IL 0 only reacts to forces, impulses, and other reactions. When we apply this unintelligent reaction to the Fifth Gear pursuit of happiness, we get the lowest base of all Life Levels, Life Level 0.

At LL 0, "happiness" is defined as the immediate satisfaction of impulses. That's it. In a way, this almost doesn't seem like desire per se, because there's no long-term wanting involved; it's only about immediate, in-the-moment gratification of desires. This is savage, animal instinct. There's no planning, no introspection at all, only immediate reaction to basic impulses.

Of course we all have natural, chemical impulses, but what defines LL 0 is that happiness itself, the final, ultimate goal of all behavior and thought and desire, is nothing more than those immediate impulses. Most animals live at LL 0, acting on instinct alone, with no consideration of any kind of long-term desire. Nearly all computer programs are LL 0, even complex AIs like Cleverbot. While Clev may be IL 1 in its Second Gear conversation skill, its Fifth Gear pursuit of happiness is effectively nil, seeking only to react to its programming.

In people, the most common example of LL 0 is in newborn babies. While babies are astonishingly intelligent in their higher gears, their Fifth Gear pursuit of happiness is adorably rudimentary. They react to what they're feeling at the moment, and that's all. When they're cold, they're cold. When they're hungry, they're hungry. And when they pass gas, they smile at the immediate feeling of release. They may be happy one moment, then outraged the next, and then quickly calmed after.

There's so much going on in those huge little heads, but their fundamental pursuit of happiness starts here at the bottom: LL 0 savagery, reacting only to immediate input.

There are LL 0 adults, who take virtually no thought for any long-term desires or hopes of even the most basic kind, even if their higher gears have grown more intelligent due to external, cultural influences. But more often, LL 0 happens in adults as only a Fallback from LL 1, rather than as a Home LL in itself. LL 1 people can become surprisingly animalistic when they slip into their Fallback!

And what are LL 1 people like? On we go to the first real quantum of the pursuit of happiness.

## Life Level 1 – Self Interest

# LIFE LEVEL 1

## Self Interest

"Everything is going according to my plan!"



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When we apply Intelligence Level 1 to the Fifth Gear, we get Life Level 1, the first real pursuit of any kind of defined happiness. IL 1 is all about recognition, about being able to see and recognize what things mean, and act accordingly as a triggered response. So in terms of pursuing an overall goal of "happiness," IL 1 becomes a pursuit of recognized successes and the avoidance of failures. At Life Level 1, ultimate happiness is defined as success. Pretty simple. LL 1's version of happiness is about getting what you want when you want it, as a sort of "triggered" happiness.

Babies naturally advance from the helpless emotion of LL 0 into LL 1's deliberate desires, around the time they're becoming toddlers. Their entire nature changes, and everything it means to live and exist changes for them. This seems to be a large part of the "terrible twos," when toddlers are figuring out that they can get recognized desires when they want to. They know what they want, and they're going to get it, and they're going to resist and refuse things they don't like. While it can be jarring for parents to see their passive baby seem to transform into an adventurous, desire-filled ball of willfulness, it's really an amazing example of a natural, quantum change in Fifth Gear intelligence.

Life Level 1 is a form of human nature, a very rudimentary form, yet it's incomparably stronger than LL 0's savagery.

Everything in life works better at LL 1 than at LL 0. And the conscious drive to seek success produces a greater capacity for happiness. This is really important: not only is each higher LL more able to reach happiness, it also has a greater capacity for experiencing happiness. The increased awareness of LL 1 enables increased experience of happiness. The purest, greatest joy of LL 0 is merely the immediate fulfillment of chemical urges; the triumph of conscious success at LL 1 is so much sweeter, so much more lasting, and just so much bigger!

Of course, when ultimate happiness itself is defined simply by the success of recognized desires, complete and total selfishness is only natural. In toddlers this selfishness is innocent and free from malice, but when an adult persists in LL 1 it tends to be ugly, bitter, or creepy, even if they manage to seem perfectly decent on the outside. An LL 1 person may be kind, generous, patient, and work well with others, but it will all be for selfish reasons. "What's in it for me?" is the essence of life at LL 1. It's a cold and lonely way to live, and it's far less effective than the higher LLs, just as LL 0 is less effective in every way than LL 1. Ironically, LL 1 is less successful than LL 2+, but that's the way it is with all Life Levels: each higher LL is more able to get what all the lower LLs wanted in the first place.

Remember, though, that we're talking about the Fifth Gear here. A clever LL 1 person may develop all kinds of Third Gear talents, Second Gear knowledge and skills, and even strong Fourth Gear character traits, all of which may lead to tremendous First Gear success. But as long as their Fifth Gear is turning so sluggishly at LL 1, they're going to have trouble turning their higher gears. Usually, LL 1 people have to resort to focusing on just one or two types of intelligence, in an attempt to make their higher gears look better than they really are. An LL 1 person may boast incredible knowledge and skill in some areas, but only at the price of incompetence in all other kinds of intelligence. A weak LL 1 Fifth Gear makes it hard to really develop much on any of the higher gears.

In the same way, beware of judging others' LLs (or your own!) when you're really seeing their higher gears. If you see someone acting selfishly, that does *\*not\** mean they must be LL 1, or even have LL 1 as a fallback. Life Levels are all about why we want what we want, what is our ultimate pursuit, and so we cannot simply look at a person's Third Gear behaviors or

habits. One person may appear remarkably selfless, yet all for LL 1 selfish motives, while another person may seem mean, irritable, grumpy, and totally uncaring of others...yet for reasons that turn out to be quite caring after all.

That's not to say that there aren't really LL 1 people who are driven by nothing but self-interest; there are plenty! And they're usually very eager to preach that self-interest is the \*only\* real human nature. This is an attempt to justify themselves, insisting that there's nothing wrong with their ineffective, heartless version of success, but 1 is certainly not the highest number. Just as the nature of intelligence means there's no highest IL, so also there is no highest LL. There's always more!

As Calise likes to say, there's always more to be happy about! Always new ways to develop even greater capacity for happiness than we yet have. Rather than get dizzy looking at the infinite different quanta of happiness ahead of us, it's so exciting to know that we can keep getting happier, more able, more successful, and grow faster in all our higher gears.

And just like with ILs, each new quantum of the pursuit of happiness keeps everything good about all the LLs before it. LL 1 retains everything good about LL 0...which isn't much, except simply existing. And then it adds onto it the conscious drive to pursue defined, intentional successes and avoid recognized failures. Every higher LL keeps this benefit of LL 1, then: LL 1+ all pursue defined, intentional successes and avoid recognized failures. LL 2+ just add more, keeping all the benefits of LL 1 while losing its glaring weaknesses.

## Life Level 2 – Social Regard

# LIFE LEVEL 2 Social Regard



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Life Level 2 grows out of LL 1 just as Intelligence Level 2 grows out of IL 1. When we apply the creative mimicry of IL 2 to the Fifth Gear, we get a distinctly social form of the pursuit of happiness. As our desires seek to mimic things we've seen work in other areas of life rather than merely seeking recognized successes, the very nature of desire changes in us. It usually goes something like this:

An LL 1 person, seeking their own successes by self-interest, eventually figures out in some form that it's simply more successful to work \*with\* others instead of constantly being at war with everyone and everything that doesn't happen to be themselves. So for purely LL 1 motives, they'll learn to cooperate, to give and not just take, and to consider others' needs, but again, all for self-serving reasons. This is still entirely LL 1, no matter how nice they may appear; their desires are all for themselves.

But as this LL 1 person works with others, they start to consider those people as valid selves, independent of their own isolated self. They start to see others' desires as real, even though they're entirely separate from their own desires. This is IL 2's mimicry, being applied to desire: just as IL 2 mimics things it's seen and applies them in entirely new ways, LL 2 mimics others' desires in its own life, which ends up resulting in seeing others' desires as equally valid with its own.

This entirely transforms everything it means to desire, and changes the definition of ultimate happiness. As Life Level 2

emerges, happiness comes to mean the unique joy of valuing other wills, other independent entities outside oneself.

Intelligence is magnificent, and at LL 2, that magnificence is perceived as just a simple joy and genuine love for other intelligences besides one's own. In short, LL 2 loves people. It loves living things, it loves the idea of life, and it terribly fears any threat to the lives of the people and creatures it values.

This means that desire changes, as all desires end up filtering toward the overriding ultimate desire of just feeling more interpersonal joy. It's a greater, more lasting joy than LL 1's sense of triumph from successes, so an LL 2 mind, able to perceive the promise of that greater joy, will seek it. LL 2 still retains LL 1's deliberate pursuit of success, but even the nature of success is redefined to include others in it.

This also becomes more effective than LL 1 in every aspect. In seeking the successes of others as well as oneself, LL 2 facilitates more natural cooperation and mutual benefit, as each person's successes enable new opportunities for everyone they cooperate with. "Synergy" is a popular term for this, sometimes used in goofy ways, but it's a true principle: People together are more effective than those same people working separately. Each piece of an engine may do very little when laid out separately, but when they're put together, they become a powerful machine.

There is one thing which might make LL 1 seem more attractive than LL 2, and that's vulnerability. The greater joy and effectiveness of LL 2, achieved through genuine, unselfish cooperation, can seem far too exposed and vulnerable to someone who resents and secretly fears everything outside themselves. The cold loneliness of LL 1 can just seem safer.

But vulnerability is simply a part of growth, and the desire for safety is sometimes the antithesis of progress, joy, and life. In order to move forward, we have to tentatively let go of where we presently are. In order to grow more able to affect the world, we have to interact with more of it. To become more intelligent, we must perceive more things, which is an ever more vulnerable experience. Vulnerability often means growth and the removal of fears, while protectiveness means ignorance and stagnation, all while further feeding the fears that cause us to close up in the first place.

This is what makes Life Level growth so hard: each higher LL is more able, more intelligent, happier, and therefore more emotionally vulnerable than the one before it. That makes it stronger, but the necessary emotional openness can just be too scary. Even when we know our current LL, and even when we know all about our Target LL that we're shooting for, it can just be hard to be vulnerable in new ways each time. This is a major part of why a healthy Fourth Gear is necessary in order to reach down and turn our Fifth. An LL 1 person who's developed healthy Fourth Gear traits, even for entirely selfish reasons, will find it much less difficult to adopt the better, happier, but initially scarier human nature of LL 2.

And LL 2 is an entirely different definition of human nature, a whole different type of inner, true self. All the popular assertions that we're all secretly selfish start to fall apart when a person becomes LL 2, and for someone who's Mastered LL 2, such assertions are simply inaccurate. Interestingly, those who insist that we're all truly selfish deep down often add that we're also just animals who behave civilized out of fear. In other words, they're unwittingly noticing that LL 1 people fall back to LL 0 at their worst. This, again, is merely the self-justifying insistence that everyone is really LL 1, with the resulting Fallback of LL 0.

Years ago, I ran into another of these people online, where they're about as common as cookies. As always, this person was ranting in an MMO about how mindless and sheeplike everyone else was; he seemed to think he was being original and free-thinking, quoting the same old thing. He insisted that we were all merely "amoebas," and that anyone who didn't find life utterly meaningless, miserable, and nihilistic was simply ignorant. He was relentlessly superior against others' happy lives, insisting that his own misery was only a result of how much smarter he was. I listened to this for a bit while others in the game had a lot of fun at his expense, but he was kinda asking for it. And at the time, I thought Second Gear knowledge would have an effect, so I posed a question: All intelligent beings desire some form of success, happiness, or fulfillment, right? And greater intelligence is better able to get what it wants, right? And yet you're saying that you're \*more\* intelligent because you're \*less\* happy?

I seriously doubt it helped this guy, but others in the game seemed to appreciate it. Life Level 1 views most others as ignorant, bland, and vapid, all as a result of not yet really seeing others as real. It's easy to feel smarter than everyone else when you don't see them as actual people. Yet in spite of the self-justifying, self-important attitudes that declare that everyone is really self-serving or savage, LL 2 shows a completely different, and contradictory, type of human nature.

This group-oriented human nature can pejoratively be called a herd mentality, but that imagery suggests LL 0 instinct rather than LL 2's real awareness of the validity of other selves. Herd animals rarely have such a sophisticated pursuit of happiness! But LL 1 people, afraid of the greater opportunities, successes, and joys of LL 2, frequently assert that non-closed-off people are dumb sheep, pretending that LL 2 is really LL 0. This is something that fearful people of any LL tend to do: afraid of the next LL, they try to portray it as the previous LL, in this case pretending that LL 2 is LL 0.

But Life Level 2 is more intelligent than LL 1, not less, retaining everything and adding more. This means that when these two quanta of desire come into conflict, an LL 2 mind will choose the greater desire. When there's a choice between seeking

the triumph of success (LL 1's desire) and the joy felt from making others happy (LL 2's desire), an LL 2 mind will naturally choose the one that brings greater happiness, without even thinking about it. An LL 1 mind would lack the quantum of intelligence to understand why LL 2 is worth choosing. Intelligent beings desire stuff, and higher LLs give more stuff.

This also means that as we seek to grow into our Target LL, we should watch for times when our Home and our Target come into conflict. In those times, it will seem entirely natural for us to prioritize the trusty desires of our Home LL over the unfamiliar desires of our Target, but as we take the leap and try out the greater desires of our Target LL, we'll show ourselves how much more effective and happier it is. This makes it a little easier to take the leap next time, until bit by bit our Target becomes our new Home.

Fiction is full of characters who take the leap from LL 1 to LL 2, making the long and difficult change of trading in self-interest for caring about others. "The Emperor's New Groove" is entirely about LL 1 versus LL 2 (as Kuzco and Yzma each choose opposite directions), as are so many children's stories and most morality tales. One of my favorites is Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol."

Scrooge starts out classically LL 1: due to pain in his past, he has entirely closed off, and his only desire is personal wealth and security. Most of all, he wants the emotional security of being independent and separate from all others. He insists that anyone who lives differently must be weaker-willed than himself, as if anyone would be so closed off if only they understood the greater security it offered. In Scrooge's mind security is synonymous with strength, as if security were capable of accomplishing things. This is classic LL 1, believing that pessimism, hardness, and coldness are strong, while in truth such things are motivated by fear, a symptom of unresolved weakness.

Up until this point, Scrooge is just another LL 1 person, cut off from the world and keeping up a constant sermon to convince himself of the superiority of his attitude, in spite of his frustrated inner desires. All too realistic. But then Dickens arranges some supernatural adventures to break Scrooge out of his mental and emotional cloister. First, Scrooge is forced to witness his own past, the hardships that induced him to close up and choose emotional security instead of living. A little fear and awe along the way help the medicine go down, of course. This first experience makes Scrooge a little more receptive, a little more open to consider his own self, rather than hiding from himself and others. In facing the things he fears, which in his case are his past experiences, his grip on LL 1 is loosened.

Next, Scrooge is led to see others' lives in the present. With his loosened hold on LL 1, he's ready to start to consider the LL 2 validity of other people's lives, desires, and pain. He's always been sure he considers others as real, even if he views them with contempt. But now that he sees others' lives up close, they truly become real to him for the first time in ages. He starts to actually care who lives and who dies. He starts to admire the fortitude of those he once despised, and the strength necessary to be decent. After seeing others as real for the first time, Scrooge genuinely wants to be good. He wants to benefit others, to make them happy, and his heart yearns for the far greater joy he knows is just out of reach, a joy gained by bringing it to others.

If Scrooge's story were to end here, he might go on living as halfway into LL 2. He'd be fairly Stable at it perhaps, or at least very Able, having seen that it's a much happier, nicer way to live. But when things got hard, when someone cheated him or got in his way, he might fall back to LL 1. He'd be teetering between staying at Home in LL 1 and truly adopting LL 2; we sometimes call such people "LL 1.5." Not that there's really an LL 1.5; the nature of quanta is that they're distinct, separate leaps; but it's just a fun shorthand way of saying that someone is kinda wavering between two LLs.

But Dickens doesn't end Scrooge's journey there; he wants to show us a full transformation from the old man into the new. Just as Scrooge is feeling full of love and hope, eager to learn and grow, he's faced with a terrifying view of a bleak future. In short, it's a future in which his life ends empty, with others glad to see him gone. The previous Scrooge might have sneered at such a scene, contemptuously protesting that he shouldn't care what happens after he dies. But now that he's begun to see others as real, Scrooge sees himself as real and precious in an entirely new and unexpected way, in a way that reflects others' preciousness instead of competing with it. LL 1 people often hate and fear themselves as much as anyone else, but now Scrooge loves himself as a result of knowing why to love others. And so the idea of his life having no meaning crushes him. He pleads with the future, insisting that he can change, that this does not need to be his life. He wants more. He sees now that there is more, that life can be far more, and he desperately wants it.

And then Scrooge is allowed to return to the present. And with this essential combination of events, he resolves to be open, be vulnerable, even if others stare at him strangely for suddenly being so different. The combination of facing his own buried hurts, witnessing the reality of others' lives, and seeing the inevitable results of an LL 1 life, along with a little fear and awe, demonstrate the required recipe for change from LL 1 to LL 2.

All this makes LL 2 sound pretty great, but it is a low LL, and it can be truly nasty. When we see a character change from LL 1 to LL 2, we tend to see only the good sides: the love and compassion, the openness and color and joy in life. But this form of human nature, seeking happiness in the form of enjoying others' reality, ends up having some very ugly results.

Life Level 2 loves people, yes, but which people? As a result of caring so deeply for the people and other living things it knows, LL 2 comes to fear anything that could hurt those people. This causes LL 2 people to fear and resent anyone different from those they know; their sense of others' reality stops at the borders of their own circle of friends. If someone seems to be a threat to the safety, comfort, or status-quo of their own group of loved ones, an LL 2 person can become thoughtlessly vicious. It's not that LL 1 doesn't have these weaknesses, it's just that they're usually overshadowed by LL 1's fear of everyone, while the interpersonal focus of LL 2 brings them into sharp visibility.

LL 2's social focus also causes it to be immensely cliquish, and obsessed with whatever current fad is popular at the time.

These fads don't have to be mainstream; many LL 2 people proudly hate things simply because they're mainstream, which is just as mindless as liking things just because they're popular. Even if their group is on the fringes, LL 2 people need to fit in with it, dressing and talking and living just like their chosen social label, whether it be fashionable or avant-garde. And so LL 2 tends to embrace shallowness; again, no more than LL 1, but much more loudly as it enjoys fitting in with its social circle. Its desire to feel the joy of others causes it to want to do anything to keep fitting in with its friends, or its family, or culture, or wherever it seeks interpersonal closeness. This makes it dangerously susceptible to peer pressure, advertisements, dogmas, ideologies, or whatever happens to be important in its social group.

Now if all of this is making you think of stereotypical, shallow teenagers, it might come as a surprise that in natural development, LL 2 is the human nature of children around ages 4-9, depending on the person. And when it occurs in children, all these weaknesses come off as innocent, because they are. As children advance into LL 2, they grow desperate to please the people who matter most to them: this might mean parents or teachers, or it might mean their peers, or any mix of all of them. Their eagerness to follow popular little fads among their friends (I always felt uncool for not being up to date on Yogi Bear), or to immerse themselves into whatever new subject they're learning at school, is a healthy way for them to explore things. They don't really grasp the size of the world or the sheer number and variation of people in it, but they care deeply about the people close to them.

When teens or adults indulge in LL 2, that's a sign of serious personal unhealthiness; their human nature is that of a prepubescent child. But when most teens or adults seem LL 2, when that becomes normal, then that's a sign of an unhealthy culture. Cultures exert powerful influences on all of us, and decent people will find it easier to be higher LL in a healthier culture, while those same people will be pulled toward lower LLs in a less healthy culture. The constant, subtle pokes of culture surround us in everything we read and watch, telling us which LLs are acceptable, which are bad, and which are "unrealistic."

The same person who might grow up to be LL 4+ in a healthy culture, might live their entire life in LL 1-2 misery in an unhealthy one. Culture is immensely powerful. In recent times, modern Western culture has tended to hover around LL 2-3, although individual subcultures are rapidly polarizing toward LL 4 on the one hand and LL 1-2 on the other. What this means is that as children develop, they're often pressured to be LL 2 or 3, even when their brains want to grow farther. And so we're quite used to LL 2 teens and even adults.

But when a person's mind knows it can reach for more, when natural human development yearns for more, this causes LL 2 teens and especially adults to really know better. And when a person knows they could be seeking a better pursuit of happiness while fighting against it, they tend to show all the weaknesses of their current LL, and fewer of its strengths.

Children, and newcomers like Scrooge, often glow with all the pure joy and love of LL 2, without yet suffering from its pitfalls. Those who cling to it when their minds are developmentally ready for more, tend to exude all the shallowness and very little of the sweetness.

And while LL 1 adults tend to justify themselves by claiming that everyone is really as messed up as they are, LL 2 usually insists that it's \*normal.\* It's a subtle difference, but while LL 1 admits that it's bad and insists that everyone else is too, LL 2 wants to excuse all its hurtful tendencies as perfectly good, as long as they're socially normal. In the social mindset of LL 2, if something is normal then it's good, and if it isn't normal then it's just bad and weird, and must be gotten rid of. When our definition of "normal" becomes "what everyone does," then we quickly find ourselves justifying all kinds of harmful things as perfectly normal.

This is often how tyrants come to power: in a low-LL culture, people can easily be fooled. If it's culturally accepted for politicians to cater to our self-focused greed or our cultural norms, they can get us to accept nearly anything. Likewise, when religion becomes LL 2, it causes hurtful and hateful teachings to be tolerated or even embraced, as long as they're portrayed as normal within that religion. In scientific subjects, the LL 2 desire to fit in causes many, especially young adult guys, to mutilate the scientific method as theories become dogmas that they preach in an effort to make their peers think they're smart. And LL 2 philosophies, often enthusiastically preached on university campuses and coffeehouses, put forward the most inane and contradictory ideals as long as they make people feel above the norm, which is just another way of being controlled by normal. Religion in general is a popular target among LL 2 people straining to prove their logic and intelligence by bashing a cartoon version of religion with a zeal no different from LL 2 religions.

LL 2 causes people to desperately try to keep up with their neighbors, burying themselves in debt or getting lost in all sorts

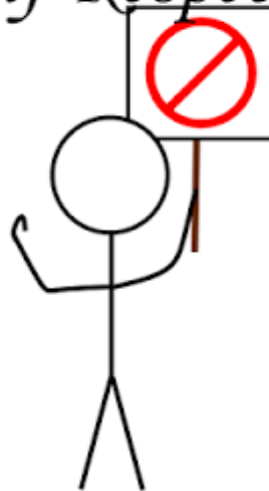
of pyramid schemes, all in the hope of eventually shining more brightly than anyone else on the block. It leads people to care only about the lives of their own family and friends, while letting their countries or cities spiral toward ruin. It causes people to get heartlessly mean to anyone outside of their own subculture, and is responsible for much of the spite all over the vast online world. The desire to be liked ends up causing floods of hate.

The purpose of all this isn't to get us frustrated at LL 2 attitudes; that won't help anyone. The purpose is to see that LL 2 *\*isn't\** normal, that it's not natural adult nature, and that if a culture can pull adults down to LL 2, then it can also pull people up. Like Scrooge learned, people can change. Entire cultures can change. We just have to know how! So much of what we consider normal, so much of what we think of as inescapable human nature, is entirely changeable. Rather than succumb to the same effects that LL 2 cultures have always suffered throughout history, we can intentionally take the reins and learn to change our very human nature, and help others learn to do the same.

## Life Level 3 – Self Respect

# LIFE LEVEL 3

## *Self Respect*



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We're gonna end up going much more in-depth into LLs 1-4 throughout Phase 2; this is all just the first snapshot of each, to cover the essentials. And remember, LLs are the Fifth Gear pursuit of happiness, not our Fourth Gear traits or Third Gear behaviors and habitual attitudes. So when you see someone who seems to be LL 2, or any other LL, always double check to see if you're looking at that person's real human nature, or if you're focusing on habits, traits, or even just simple mistakes. When we focus on higher-gear ability, then it's remarkable how quickly Life Levels get morphed into a divisive ranking system, placing some people above others.

This actually goes flatly against the two main purposes in telling you about Life Levels: Firstly, to show how people can change in even these fundamental ways. To show how a person's very nature can change, even though we rarely see it happen in this culture once people reach adulthood. And Secondly, to give each of you the roadmap onward, free from the limitations of your own LL, which you may have thought were just inescapable facts of life. Once we see what LL we've been living at, and then see what comes next, it's like being suddenly set loose from having been chained down our whole lives!

Not that LL change isn't difficult, but knowing the path ahead, and how to get there, makes all the difference in the world. Yet when we focus too much on the typical behaviors and attitudes that come as symptoms from each LL, it frequently degenerates into a superficial ranking system that people use to put others down and build themselves up. This defies the first purpose, of showing that people can change. When we use LLs to compare ourselves with others, we start believing that others won't change, that they're just "low LL people." And it also ends up defying the second purpose, since we tend to stop progressing into our own Target LL when we're so busy feeling above others.

The word "levels" can be problematic, especially when there are plenty of divisive systems that try to place some kinds of people on a level above others. But we hope that if you've read this far, then you'll get that this is not some limited pyramid



of needs, attitudes, or even of desires; the endless nature of Life Levels means that we all have growth to be working on! We all always have more happiness ahead! As we use LLs not to compare, but to transform everything it means to live, think, and desire, all our higher gears start turning faster than we'd ever known they could! And then as our Target becomes our Home, then there's a whole new horizon to grow into after that!

So on, then, into the next quantum of human nature, Life Level 3. This grows naturally out of LL 2 just as IL 3 grows out of IL 2. As with ILs, each additional quantum is simply the inevitable result of following through the previous quantum to its conclusion. When we take LL 1 self-interest and follow it to its conclusion, we find that in the search for more self-benefit, inevitably a person has to grow to truly care about others. As we follow LL 1 to its conclusion, LL 2 naturally and inevitably results. In the same way, when we follow LL 2 to its unavoidable conclusion, LL 3 comes out, as the Fifth Gear application of IL 3.

So let's take the LL 2 desire for the joy of human interaction, and see where it leads. Imagine an LL 2 person, with all the strengths and pitfalls that typically result from the second quantum of the pursuit of happiness. They love the people they love, even if it causes them to fear and hate anyone different. And they live in pursuit of the joy, effectiveness, and greater success that comes from being close to others. They love to love and be loved, to like and be liked.

Yet sooner or later, it eventually occurs to them that people like you better when you're true to yourself. When we rush to agree with what our friends are saying and doing, it comes off a little insincere. When our beliefs, attitudes, habits, and even our likes and dislikes are dictated by our social circle, we don't really stand out. And so, desiring to stand out more, to be liked more and loved more, and therefore more able to feel more of LL 2's end desire, our LL 2 person will start to figure out who they are. If they'll be liked more if they're true to themselves, then they need to find out who "themselves" is!

Instead of eagerly defining themselves by their social category, our LL 2 person now starts trying to define themselves by discovering who they really are, and who they want to be. Do they really like what their friends like? They may have never truly asked this before, because why would they? Why would they risk separating themselves? But now, they want to stand out! For entirely LL 2 motives, they try on all sorts of personas, outfits, jargons and slangs, hats and hairstyles and jobs and beliefs, all with the intent of one day shining far brighter than they ever have before.

And as they come to acquaint themselves with who they really are, and have always secretly wanted to be, the meaning of desire and happiness both change. They realize that the thrill, the peace, the power and effectiveness and joy of knowing their own self, is far greater, happier, and more useful than even the joy of being around others. They still care about others, and they still love to love them, but now they've found more! They've found themselves.

This is IL 3's competence, applied to the pursuit of happiness. This is Life Level 3, where happiness is defined as success, sure, and interpersonal love, absolutely, but more than that, happiness is that irreplaceable joy and strength of knowing yourself, and being true to who you are. All shorter-term desires, all actions and ambitions and thoughts all funnel toward the overarching desire of knowing and being oneself.

Like IL 3, LL 3 no longer needs to mimic. It no longer needs to take cues from its friends, family, mentors, or anyone else in order to know what's good, what's right, what's likeable, and what isn't. It determines its own thoughts, and its own desires. It explores new ideas, beliefs, methods, and attitudes that it's never seen elsewhere, seeking more to add to its existing beliefs and ideas. It defies limits in pursuit of doing whatever's best, even if it does it alone. This makes all higher gears, all of life, work so much better. Success and friendship become easier to attain and keep, and more joyful now as they reflect the reality of the LL 3 person's true self.

This brings out an important and fascinating side of LL growth: As our Life Level increases, as our quantum of desire grows leap by leap, we become more self-aware, more conscious of everything that happens to us, and more free to choose what we want to do about it. This is how we feel on those days when we reach up and live at our Target LL, as if color is suddenly brighter, thoughts are suddenly clearer, and every experience is suddenly sharper. As Life Levels are indeed levels of intelligence itself, manifested on such a deep layer of intelligence, each increase in LL makes us more intelligent, aware, and simply alive! In such a deeper way than any increase in skill or knowledge, attitude or habit or even underlying traits. As we grow LL by LL, then all the sharp awareness, the sweeter joys and the freer ability to choose that we feel at our Target, can become our constant Home, with a new, brighter and more conscious Target to shoot for.

Now I feel weird pointing that out, because the promise of a brighter, better life is everywhere, in well-meaning philosophies and in not-so-well-intentioned schemes. But maybe it should be. Not that the schemes are good, but of course people should want more! Of course faiths and philosophies of all kinds talk about becoming a new person, a happier and more effective person, because we want that! Since humanity makes more from less, we all naturally want more!

Yet while sermons, clubs, and seminars aplenty offer the promise of that brighter future, they often tend to focus on the higher gears, on tips and tricks, habits and attitudes. Those can help, and they can truly induce LL change as they unclog the higher gears, but I just wanted to point out once again that those higher-gear teachings are not the same as a change in

such a deep gear. All of it helps, and powerful, life-changing experiences are usually an unwitting change in LL, but when we focus primarily on higher gears then we miss out on all the power of turning the larger, lower gears, and we leave those deep parts of ourselves untended.

Understanding the Fifth Gear allows us to deliberately create those life-changing LL leaps, quantum by quantum, as we seek to let our Target take precedence over our Home. For LL 3, this means that we must watch for situations in which being true to ourselves and what we know to be right, conflicts with what those we care about want us to do. The easier, perhaps familiar LL 2 desire would try to fudge on our personal integrity in order to please the people around us, but as we try out the higher, more effective, yet sometimes scarier desire of LL 3, we gradually train our minds to see how much happier, better, and more effective it is. And just as LL 2 gets success better than LL 1 does, LL 3 ends up being loved, respected, and liked so much more than the flighty shallowness of LL 2.

The conflict between LL 2 and LL 3 runs strong through the themes of many teen morality tales and coming-of-age stories. Not that the writers realize they're contrasting two contradictory kinds of human nature; people just seem aware that LL 3 is better than LL 2, even without knowing how they work, just as we all know that LL 2 is better than LL 1. Well, all of us who are LL 2+, that is.

When LL 2 people fear LL 3, however, they often end up portraying it as mean, uncaring, inconsiderate, or inhuman. In other words, LL 1. As always, when we fear the next LL, we tend to pretend it's the previous LL. But LL 3 does care about people, retaining all the joys and awareness of LL 2, only with more added. In fact, it tends to be capable of caring about more people, as its horizons extend beyond the limitations of its own clique of friends, family, or peers. LL 2 is all about loving people, yes, but it's just the beginning of love, not the end! Each LL adds a whole new quantum that changes everything, over and over!

Yet just as a child might shout "You're mean!" to a parent who declines to let them eat paint, sometimes LL 3 has to endure looking heartless in order to protect, love, and help the people it cares about. When LL 3 has to choose between what it knows will be best for someone, and what it knows the person will like, it has the maturity and competence of understanding necessary to make the better choice, and endure being called mean.

This degree of maturity is actually natural in preteens, as the human mind wants to grow into LL 3 around the ages of 8-13, depending on the person. Yeah, that's not the way we tend to think of preteens in modern Western culture. But naturally, the mind wants to be strong and dependable, honest and true to itself and its beliefs in all it does, around the ages of 8-13. It wants to be flighty no longer, a child no longer. In many older cultures, adulthood was considered to begin toward the end of this span, perhaps because those cultures noticed that after that age, people could be depended upon to be competent, to be functional and mature, as children no longer.

But our modern culture does not score very well when it comes to human nature, and an unhealthy culture makes it harder for individuals to develop. The preteen years are when many youth are flung into jungle-like situations where might makes right, bullies are ever more brazen, and petty insults are the common local dialect. When a mind is trying to make the difficult transition from LL 2 to LL 3, all while surrounded by LL 1 and 2 influences on every side, it's remarkable that any teens ever manage to pull it off. Culture is so powerful, but since it's a collection of people it can change, whether downward or upward. We just need to know how, and Life Levels are the basic tools to start with.

Many teens in our modern culture manage to struggle into LL 3 during their mid to late teen years, but most seem to have trouble getting much farther. While preteens often eddy around in the childish caprice of LL 2, constantly chasing whatever their friends are doing, many older teens evolve up into the next quantum to change their entire human nature. They want to define themselves as themselves, and they want to explore and find out who that is! But that exploration becomes difficult and even dangerous when LL 1 and 2 predators are constantly eager to ruin your life. In an effort to break free from the LL 2 desire to please parents and other adults, teens get lost in all kinds of self-destruction, all in an attempt to choose LL 3 instead of LL 2. "This is who I am!" they'll tell themselves and anyone else who will hear, wavering between the strength of LL 3 and the insecurity of LL 2.

And in adults as well, LL 3 leads to wildly oversimplified beliefs and attitudes. The desire to know and be true to oneself results in far more complex and consistent beliefs than at LL 2, yet this very desire causes people to fear anything they don't understand. While LL 2 fears things that are different from its social norm, LL 3 fears anything that threatens to challenge its sense of self. This allows LL3 people to learn and consider far more than they could at LL 2, but it still keeps their minds painfully fenced-in. And so, with such little input from differing beliefs and outlooks, LL 3 attitudes are typically simplistic, rigid, and self-contradictory when viewed with much scrutiny. LL 3 people don't want to view themselves or their beliefs with too much scrutiny, because if they do, they might not be able to hold quite so true anymore. At LL 3, there is no greater joy than personal honor and integrity, therefore it's better to be true to a flawed self than to face those flaws.

And it seems better to be true to flawed beliefs at LL 3, than to acknowledge their limitations. With so little input from other points of view, LL 3 people often have very little actual idea of how sensible other beliefs may be. They may declare

themselves to be entirely open-minded, and they'll believe they are, but it's all within the careful limits of what they already believe. They'll be open to consider anything, anything at all! As long as it fits with what they already know.

And so LL 3 politics makes simplified strawmen out of all differing points of view. It seems that the overwhelming majority of modern politics is LL 3 at best, with each side painfully oversimplifying every issue, and oversimplifying their opponents even more. Each side calls the other ignorant, dishonest, prejudiced, stupid, irrational, and so on. Each engages in similar tactics, and each is entirely certain of its own correctness.

This is largely because, in reality, political issues aren't what matter to people. Oh, they may shout all day about the issues, but each political point is only a contributing piece in the overall ideals by which they define themselves at LL 3, or their social norms at LL 2. It's their LL 3 sense of self that's the issue, or perhaps their LL 2 sense of fitting in, or worse. This is why political issues never end, because they're not about the issues, they're about people clinging to a powerful way of defining themselves. This is why reason doesn't often enter into political preferences, regardless of how much people may concoct justifications for their views after they choose them. This is why people so rarely change their minds about political subjects, and why it's hard to talk about politics unless everyone agrees: because it's not about the politics, it's about Life Level. In LL 3's case, it's about the emotion of holding true to one's own ideals, whatever those may be. No amount of reason, debate, or conversation will change beliefs, when those beliefs are the foundation of how a person defines happiness itself.

The same applies in matters of faith, and this absolutely includes atheism. At LL 3, each religion and each ideology is certain of its own correctness, and unable to see that everyone else is just as certain as they are. Rather than seeing that other points of view have intriguingly compelling arguments, LL 3 people have to simplify all who believe differently from themselves. Again, this is not about the belief itself, it's about the desperate LL 3 need to hold true to how they define themselves. And so, no amount of reason will change anyone's mind, as long as they're believing things for LL 3 motives. LL 3 or LL 2 atheists will talk nonstop about how skeptically logical they are, all in the service of their emotional need to hold strong to their image of their self at LL 3, or to put forth an image they want at LL 2. And LL 3 or LL 2 religious people will talk nonstop about the evils or ignorance of all who don't believe as they do, pretending to serve their idea of Infinity while, in truth, they're really worshiping their idea of themselves.

Of course neither politics nor religion need to be this way! But in an LL 2-3 culture, this is exactly what they become. When life experiences funnel LL 3 people toward a particular political or religious belief, they end up holding strong to that belief not as a result of careful consideration, but as a result of the person life has made them. In holding true to themselves, they become a puppet of their past. In this way, LL 3 is quite passive. Less passive than LL 2, but still, LL 3 people tend to be the product of their lives, rather than the other way around. And so in being true to themselves, they end up holding true to the person life has made them, even if that's not very healthy or reasonable at all.

We're going to end up talking about LL 3 a lot on Phase 2, especially in how it fights and fears LL 4+. In any effort to nudge cultures or individuals toward LL 4, the greatest enemy isn't LL 1, it's LL 3. LL 3 is intelligent enough to pose a problem, while not intelligent enough to grow. And LL 4, as we'll see in a moment, is such an important turning point; it's really the first of the truly healthy LLs.

So we're going to talk about how LL 3 destroys science, and slows scientific progress in tragic, unnecessary, and entirely typical ways that repeat history over and over. Our culture's current understanding of law and economics, and all the immersive effects they have on all our lives, is constrained by LL 2-3. In mentioning science, economics, and law, I'm afraid of putting you to sleep, but that's just it: a LL 2-3 version of those things becomes convoluted, lifeless, and limiting. Law and economics are the study of life, and science is all about how to make life better, so the LL 4+ versions of each should actually excite everyone, not just the nerdy.

Speaking of nerdy, though, one really fascinating example of truly dark LL 3 is Darth Vader. As the iconic villain-in-black, we might assume that the heavily respirating Sith Lord would have to be LL 1, but that's just what makes Vader such a cool and persistently popular character! His motives actually have nothing to do with LL 1 selfishness. Everything he does is about holding true to his worldview, which is the way he defines himself. Even in the service of the selfish, evil Dark Side of the Force, Vader is all about the honor of what the Dark Side makes him. Yes, he cares about what he can get for himself, and in a very twisted and private way he does care about the people closest to him, but his real love is honor, duty, and holding true to what he believes to be right. "You don't know the powahhhh of the Dark Side!"

# "You don't know the POWAHHH of the Dark Side!"



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Vader's earlier self, Anakin Skywalker, is a sticky situation because there are multiple versions of the character. Since this is Phase 2, I feel safe saying that Vader is INTJ without going into a long explanation, but the Anakin of the Star Wars prequels is not. While Darth Vader is a classically LL 3 INTJ in both weaknesses and adorable strengths, the prequel Anakin is a thoroughly LL 2 ISFP (as is George Lucas; ISFP I mean), and so the character simply does not match up. This inconsistency causes a lot of people to kinda resent the whiny, immature, LL 2 character in the prequels, even if they can't quite put their finger on why. And no, I am not saying that ISFP is whiny; LL 2 is.

Contrast this with the phenomenal Clone Wars computer animated series, in which young Anakin shines as, you guessed it, an engagingly LL 3 INTJ riddled with, well, [Anakin Angst](#). When writers know their craft, they make consistent characters without having to know exactly how. In that series, both Anakin and his mentor, ENTJ Obi-Wan Kenobi, teeter back and forth between LL 3 and LL 4. Most of their struggles revolve around that LL difference, as do so many difficult decisions in real life. If either one of them had known and applied LL 4 fully, then Darth Vader might never have come to be. How might our lives turn out differently, as we learn entirely new kinds of human nature?

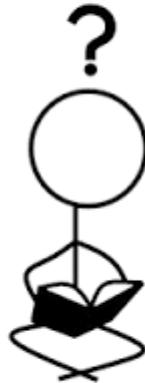
Even nerdier sidenote: there are some excellently made fan edits of the prequel Star Wars movies, which edit scenes in such a way that they subtly change the characters' choices, motives, and even outcomes. This change in characters' choices means a change in their desires, which results in a change in both cognitive type and Life Level! In my favorite fan edit, which makes all the prequel movies unrecognizably good, Anakin once again becomes LL 3 INTJ, without the editor even knowing it. He just wanted to make it "feel" consistent with the original movies, and so ended up fixing the portrayal of the characters' Fourth and Fifth Gear intelligence.

In all seriousness, though, as we learn and apply higher LLs ourselves, we can prevent our own inner Darth Vaders from hurting our lives and the lives of those around us. So on now to the main event, the Life Level that all of Phase 2 is geared toward—Life Level 4.

## Life Level 4 – Unbiased Rigor

# LIFE LEVEL 4

## UNBIASED RIGOR



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Life Level 4, like Intelligence Level 4, is a special pivot point in the growth of Fifth Gear intelligence. In LL 2 and below, people are constantly sabotaging their own lives while wondering why things just don't work out for them, blaming bad luck or other people, or insisting that such a life of disappointment is normal. And LL 3's competence and honor is capable of keeping life securely afloat, creating a nice and safe existence, but its fear to look beyond the ideas and experiences that it uses to define itself, causes it to severely stunt its capacity for growth. LLs 0-2 face backward and downward, while LL 3 is neutral and stable.

LL 4, by contrast, is the first real forward-facing LL. We used to call the transition from LL 3 to LL 4 the "Great Barrier," because if a person can just get past that, then they're set. They're going to keep on growing in LL, even if it starts slow. LLs 3 and below may resist growth or even sink more and more into their Fallback, but once someone truly adopts LL 4, then they're going to keep going forward no matter what.

Of course anyone of any LL can progress if they choose to, up into LL 4 and on from there, but LL 4 is the big turning point. Life at LL 3 is often stagnant, as we're used to seeing in so many parts of our culture, and at LL 2 and below life only gets worse with each passing year, as we see all too often in other aspects of our modern world. But when people are LL 4, then life just gets better and better, year by year and hour by hour! An LL 4 culture, even a little mini-culture of a small group working together, creates for itself and others an entirely different world, a world of daring solutions that take into account all sixteen types of intelligence.

The transition from LL 3 to LL 4 should actually be easier than all previous ones, because higher LLs are more intelligent and so have an easier time learning to grow in new ways. Yet in an unhealthy culture, the transition ends up being immensely hard; anti-LL 4 attitudes and influences are everywhere, telling us we can't or shouldn't even aim for it. Even when we manage to reach up into LL 4 as a Target, all the cultural pressure makes it hard to really live that way Stably. This means that it helps immeasurably to have friends to support us along the way! To have a mini-culture of people that redefines normal, which sees that honor and goodness go far beyond the limited rigidity of LL 3, and which helps and encourages us as we defy the culture and choose LL 4 happiness over all lower LLs.

But what is LL 4? Let's follow LL 3 to its inevitable conclusion, and see where it leads. Imagine an LL 3 person, whose every desire, action, and thought points toward a happiness defined by self-respect, the power and peaceful joy of knowing oneself and being true to it. This person will try to be honorable and true to their beliefs, no matter what LL 2 social pressures they have to endure, and no matter what LL 1 threats or bribes they face. And no matter what their beliefs may happen to be. They might be extreme or moderate, on one side of issues or another, but in any case, the LL 3 person will try to be strong in their convictions, no matter what they are. They might not even realize how much they want this, because it comes from an underlying, ultimate desire to feel that joy of personal integrity.

Therefore, wanting to be strong and true in their own ideals, they'll work hard to follow every part of their personal code of belief. And this is where they unexpectedly run into LL 4, which is often an unwelcome surprise. No manmade set of beliefs is ever really complex enough to account for all the intricacies of reality. Certainly, we can understand true principles that have no exceptions, and that's often hard enough to get right. But as soon as we try to apply those principles, things get

infinitely complicated!

For example, it is a true principle that more intelligence leads to more happiness. This principle is always true; it's not a generality or an oversimplification, since it has no exceptions, because it's all part of the definition of what intelligence is.

Once we understand intelligence, apart from mere knowledge or talent, then this principle naturally follows. Alright, but how do we apply it in life? That's when things get complicated! That's when we find the sixteen facets of intelligence, and then the six layers of intelligence that they apply to, and the unlimited infinitude of quantized Intelligence Levels that result! And then we have the specific peculiarities of how ILs apply to each layer, and how each type of intelligence approaches each IL a little differently from the others. There's the complexity of checking whether someone's actions demonstrate Fifth Gear LL or something on a higher gear, and whether someone's ability is Second Gear tips and tricks, Third Gear talent, or Fourth Gear personal traits. And once we get a handle on all that, then there's still more nuance, more complexity in how this simple principle applies!

None of this makes the principle untrue, or only partially true. It is still universally true that more intelligence leads to more happiness. None of the resulting complexity ever shows any exceptions to the principle; it just shows that its applications in life are dynamic and complicated! This is the way it goes for any set of beliefs: the real-life applications of any idea, any question, any principle or conclusion or consequence or character judgment, the real applications of any thought at all, all end up being far more complicated than we might ever imagine.

So going back to our LL 3 person who wants to be true to every aspect of their own beliefs or ideals, they slowly start to run into difficulties due to the unavoidable simplicity of their beliefs against the infinite complexity of reality. Their treasured beliefs start having exceptions, contradictions, and unexpected implications. As an example, let's use LL 3 Darth Vader. As an IJ, his beliefs tend to be based mainly on principles. In his case, he believes that order is good; that's a principle, and a commonly LL 3 one too. Order makes life flourish, it prevents and heals suffering, and it facilitates progress. Fine, that's all true, always. It's a principle. But what about how it applies?

In Vader's LL 3 personal code of beliefs, order requires force. Woah, now we've made a logical leap! Order is always good, yes, but is it a universal principle that order always requires force? No, not at all. That's a simplification. Sometimes force helps, and sometimes it hinders, and Darth Vader's iron-fisted Empire ends up ruining lives and inciting rebellion. He actually ends up working against the definition of order, since his Empire's one-size-fits-all sense of control ends up not really fitting anyone, making life much less orderly and efficient. In his LL 3 desire to apply his beliefs about the goodness of order, he ends up violating his own beliefs.

This rude awakening happens to LL 3 people constantly, as the complexity of reality shows them contradictions in their own code of belief. And so they have a choice: they can try to blind themselves to reality and cling to their belief while denying the obvious contradictions, or they can simply adapt their ideals to fit with the unforeseen complexity. The first, self-deceptive route leads back downward to a Fallback of LL 2, while the second, adaptive route leads another small step toward LL 4.

And Vader does reluctantly adapt his rigid, simplistic set of beliefs. Bitter after the chaos and destruction of the Clone Wars, which he blames on disorderly corruption and greed, Vader at first wants to make sure such pointless warfare can never happen again. Even after he knows that the entire war was a ruse, he still sees it as only a symptom of the corruption that has infected his beloved galaxy. And so he embraces unlimited, unrestrained, remorseless force as the \*only\* answer to bring order to that corruption. A very simplistic view of order, as most LL 3 beliefs tend to be. Vader doesn't see it as simplistic, but we can.

And pursuing this wildly simplistic LL 3 system of belief, Vader promptly ruins his own life. This causes him to choose between blinding himself, or adapting his beliefs to the unexpected complexity that life threw at him. Decades later, he's finally expanded his ideals to admit that his Emperor's version of force causes destructive conflict, not order. He no longer believes that force is always good; some kinds of force produce conflict. Okay, he's learning. His rigid, simplistic beliefs are getting a bit more complex.

As this happens to real people, they slowly start to be a bit more careful about loudly declaring the rightness of their own views. Every time the inconvenient nuances of life show them to be dead wrong, they get a bit more cautious about solidifying onto any belief. This often causes them to cling even more tightly to their core beliefs, but sooner or later reality will penetrate even to those, showing that nothing is quite so simple in practice. And every time, the LL 3 person can choose to blind themselves, or adapt.

Without them realizing it, they're choosing between LL 3's version of happiness and LL 4's. The self-deceptive denial pursues LL 3 happiness: personal integrity at any cost. But the adaptive route realizes that it cannot pretend to be true to itself if it ignores even the littlest problems in its beliefs. Self-deception is the absolute opposite of personal integrity! And so, for LL 3 motives, they try to find and adapt to what's really true, and fit it into their existing beliefs. This adaptation unwittingly starts to pursue LL 4's happiness, a whole new, resultant definition of happiness that entirely changes the nature

of desire itself all over again.

At Life Level 4, ultimate “happiness” is the thrill of seeing and knowing reality as it really is, in all its majestic surprises. LL 1 wants to view reality through the lens of whatever seems most advantageous, while LL 2 skews reality according to whatever its social circle believes. LL 3 forces reality to fit into a manmade, oversimplified mold, but LL 4 throws the mold away and watches in awe as reality shows them its elegant and infinitely beautiful grandeur. This joy dwarfs by far even the sweetest feelings of personal honor, and in fact it increases one's sense of worth even while demonstrating how pathetically foolish, tiny, and petty a person is. It's this tininess that makes humanity suddenly seem inexpressibly miraculous, like an immature heir with the potential for greatness, looking out for the first time over his vast future kingdom.

This incomparably greater, more powerful form of happiness changes all desires to funnel toward it, even at the cost of all LL 3 self-respect, LL 2 social regard, and LL 1 self-interest. It's like trading pennies for a fortune, giving up those lower LLs for LL 4. And, as always, LL 4 is far more able to get what those earlier LLs were after in the first place! The open honesty of being willing to see whatever reality offers, results in much greater self-respect and a much sweeter, more consistent feeling of integrity than LL 3's rigidity can ever hope to offer. People naturally gravitate to the capable insights and ability that flow from LL 4's honest approach to life, giving much more LL 2 likability while also increasing a person's ability to enjoy and appreciate everyone they meet. And when it comes to LL 1 success, LL 4's candid approach to reality allows decisiveness, genius, adaptation, and inspiration beyond the dreams of LL 1.

This makes all higher gears turn so much faster than at LL 3. An LL 4 person doesn't have to limit their pursuits to only a few types of intelligence, but naturally overflows into all sixteen in all their gears. All of this is, of course, LL 4's discovery applied to the Fifth Gear pursuit of happiness. Intelligence Level 4 is all about the discovery of things beyond one's own pursuits, the seeking of things beyond one's own desires, and the adoration of things beyond one's own preferences. When it comes to human nature, Life Level 4 becomes an entirely new deepest drive, an ultimate desire built entirely around LL 4's desire to break past the limits of its own desires.

Now, this is not at all the same as declaring oneself to be open-minded. LL 2 and even LL 1 people do that all the time, advertising themselves to anyone who can be convinced to believe them. And since being open-minded is usually considered to be good, most LL 3 ideals cause LL 3 people to view themselves as entirely open-minded...unlike all those idiots who believe differently from them. Uh huh, sure, that's very open-minded. But like all LLs, LL 4 is all about motivation. What's your ultimate goal? If someone wants to be open-minded in order to feel good about themselves, their ultimate goal isn't being open-minded, it's feeling good about themselves, or LL 3. If a person wants to be open-minded in order to look good, then their ultimate desire is LL 2. And if they want to be truly, genuinely open-minded, but only for self-serving ends, then that isn't LL 4, it's LL 1.

Life Level 4 doesn't tend to go around telling people it's open-minded, logical, honest, wise, smart, or whatever else it might be. It tends to be too busy learning whatever it can, on any gear! Why does an LL 4 person want to be open-minded? Simply because it feels awesome, because reality feels amazing. There's a quasi-spiritual thrill in touching the cosmos, in facing the world as it really is. It's like looking into a magic mirror that shows everything in brighter colors and more vibrant possibilities. It's just joy. That's why LL 4 people like knowing reality as it is, because it's their definition of ultimate happiness.

Anyone can love learning, but that does not make them LL 4 by any means. \*Why\* do they love learning? To feel smart, LL 3? To feel \*smarter\* than others, LL 2? To get an edge over others, LL 1? Or just because it feels amazing, LL 4? Because learning becomes its own reward, LL 4 people never get uncomfortable learning new things, even when those things entirely contradict everything they thought they ever knew. While LL 3 people try to find a way to fit everything new into the things they already know, and LL 2 tries to fit it all into the things its social group already believes, LL 4 learns to let nature speak for itself, without putting words into its mouth or forcing it to fit anywhere.

This is not to say that LL 4 people don't form beliefs, they do! But they always keep them tentative. They're always willing to eat their own beliefs. When faced with a choice between holding onto what they already “know,” versus humbling their beliefs before an apparently contradictory experience, implication, or idea, an LL 4 mind doesn't even hesitate. When faced with the choice between LL 3's version of happiness, holding strong to what it knows, and LL 4's version of happiness, being vulnerable like a student to all the complexity of existence, an LL 4 mind will always choose the greater, sweeter, more effective quantum of happiness.

All intelligent beings desire stuff. And when we know more accurately what things are really like, then we can know more accurately what to do in order to get what we desire. When we understand people, ourselves, the world, situations, and events as they are, we more easily get whatever results we're aiming for. All the LLs below 4 seek to delude themselves in some way, because they care more about their version of ultimate happiness than they do about what reality really is. This severely limits their ability to fulfill any of their desires, making life a constant minefield of disappointments, or at best a stagnant attempt to hold onto things as they are. Only at LL 4 can a person start to see things as they really are, and so move forward in all their gears, every moment of every day.

When Life Level 3 tries to be open-minded, it usually tries to add to its existing ideas. Without trying to, LL 3 minds look for ways to fit all new experiences and ideas into the framework of what they already “know.” An LL 3 person might readily admit that there’s so much that they don’t know, but they’ll still secretly believe that they \*know\* the things they do know. They might acknowledge that other, different points of view have intriguingly valid points, but those “different” points of view will usually end up having a convenient amount in common with their established set of beliefs.

Yet anything that’s too different, too “out there,” they’ll view with distaste. LL 3 people often try to portray attitudes or ideas that are too different from their own as foolish or hokey, regardless of how silly or inconsistent their own beliefs may be. Often, they’ll act as if such different ideas are so stupid that they’re dangerous. And LL 2 is terrified of what others might think if they saw them considering anything foolish or hokey! Yes, there are many truly dangerous falsehoods, which induce people to make terrible decisions and ruin their lives. Other ridiculous ideas cause people to waste much time and energy chasing false hopes, usually for low-LL motives. Yet LL 4 is nonetheless open to investigate, and if indeed something turns out to be ridiculous, then the LL 4 person will move on happily, with no harm done. But if the presumed foolishness ends up being brilliance that lower LLs feared, then that’s often how awesome discoveries get made.

In natural development, the mind wants to progress from LL 3 to LL 4 during the teen years, usually throughout the ages of 12-18, depending. But when an unhealthy culture fears the lucid insights of LL 4, it makes it very hard for anyone to get there. While teens want to question everything, and while teens and young adults do tend to question their old LL 3 beliefs, they’re rarely ever able to really grow into LL 4 honest inquiry. Instead, they usually just trade one LL 3 code of beliefs for a new, rigid LL 3 set of ideals. This is not LL 4.

Just because you change your mind, does not mean you did it for LL 4 motives. An LL 1 person might change their mind if they see advantage in it, and an LL 2 person will readily change everything about themselves in order to adapt to a new social label. And LL 3 will boldly change its mind and its entire code of beliefs and ideals, as long as that helps them feel like they’re being truer to their real self. As always with LLs, it’s all about why you do it, what is your underlying pursuit of happiness.

Our culture makes it very difficult to be truly candid with oneself. We’re pressured to have strong opinions, or else others may outright call us dumb, weak, or untrustworthy. If we would rather be open to joyfully learn without solidifying on a rigid list of beliefs, we’ll often be resented and maligned. It’s odd, but it’s as if most people believe that if you’re not rigidly LL 3, then you aren’t effective or trustworthy. In other words, they’re pretending that LL 4 is really LL 2. Rather than dare to acknowledge that LL 4 retains all the honor and virtue of LL 3 while adding on a whole new quantum of personal honesty and candor, unhealthy LL 3 people want to pretend that it’s weaker and even dishonest.

LL 4 people adapt to the complexity of reality, causing LL 3 to believe that they can’t be trusted. In our unhealthy culture, many people are feeling more and more need to feel in control, because they fear that their lives are going less and less the way they once hoped. LL 4 is about giving up control, and that makes LL 3 downright uneasy. And while LL 4 people love having and enjoying good things, and while they tend to appreciate and enjoy everything far more than people of lower LLs, they’re still willing to sacrifice anything, go through anything, look ridiculous and lose anything at all, if it means knowing and enjoying reality as it really is. This terrifies LL 3’s desire for security, and LL 2’s need for comfort.

LL 4 makes LL 3 feel stupid, when its open honesty ends up unintentionally exposing glaring flaws in an LL 3 person’s worldview. It shows the immense bias that all LL 3 people unavoidably have, in contrast with LL 4’s eager desire to know whatever may be true, no matter what it may turn out to be. This makes LL 3 and below feel petty, because they are. When an LL 4 person is around, LL 3 doesn’t feel quite so honorable anymore, not so proud of itself, not so strong and wise. And because LL 3 fears growing beyond its own careful boundaries, it doesn’t seek to correct these flaws, but rather resents LL 4 people and tries to tear them down. LL 2 and 1 are even more vicious about it. LL 4 people make everyone else look at themselves more honestly, and most people don’t like really doing that.

Long story short, our unhealthy culture seriously fears LL 4. So in reaction, our fiction cries out for it, and more and more protagonists in nearly every adult story are either LL 4, or LL 3.5 struggling to make the difficult choices between LLs 3 and 4. Disney movies in particular tend to be powerfully insightful treatises on LL 4 vs. LL 3, and more and more movies and shows are taking this theme more directly and overtly, without realizing they’re comparing two contradictory definitions of human nature that are quietly at war across our entire culture, tearing it into rapidly polarizing halves. While vapid LL 2-3 heroes did indeed entertain audiences in the past, we now demand that even our most action-packed superhero movies show LL 4 or LL 3.5 people wrestling with applicable life choices. When stories fail to focus on LL 4 lately, they often flop.

Yet on the other side, while one part of modern culture is yearning for LL 4, the louder, more childish side resents and fears it. So while almost everyone praises LL 4 attitudes, for some that praise is only empty lipservice which amounts to a way of saying, “See! I’m already honest and open-minded, so don’t you dare ask me to be!” All this makes it very hard for teens to grow into LL 4, even when their minds naturally want to. So no wonder there’s so much hurt, so much pain and angst; we’re being pressured to live at a lower form of human nature than we really want, and some of us end up giving in to the pressure.



LL 4 is not LL 2, or even LL 1 as some would like to portray it, no matter how much our modern LL 2-3 culture is terrified of it.

And so, the heartbreaking majority of people live their whole lives at LL 2 or 3. This is not how the world has to be. “Human nature” as we know it is not a constant, it’s a sick mixture of two human natures, which naturally belong in our childhood and pre-adolescent years. Human nature as we know it is not the same as it’s been in other eras, and in fact it differs widely from region to region. In some pockets of the world, LL 4 is much, much easier to grow into! In other areas, even the most eagerly decent person will have a hard time resisting being pulled down to LL 1.

Culture is a huge influence, and cultures differ through time and geography, and they gradually change all the time. Powerful advances in communication like writing, the printing press, or television force cultures to change even more rapidly, and with the game-changing capabilities of the internet, how might we intentionally change our own mini-cultures, subcultures, and eventually the world?

We do not need to accept that most adults are naturally petty, selfish, and ignorant. That’s not natural among adults; it takes a powerfully unhealthy culture to make adults into children. We do not need to feel that once we “grow up,” we stop growing. Most people who grew up during the 1970s still hover around the average LLs of the ‘70s, while most who grew up during the 1950s still retain the average LL of that time. When we change our entire human nature every few years in our youth, the idea of stopping and staying at the same LL for all the rest of our lives sounds horrifyingly empty.

So many teens and young adults think they dread responsibility, when in truth many of them are really dreading stagnancy. True responsibility should be exciting, because it means power and opportunity! But at LL 3 and below, it means anything but. Therefore many want to live fast while they’re young, accepting the false premise that they’ll have to give it all up once they become boring adults. It’s as if just when our lives are finally, truly ready to begin, we have to die on the inside. This is life in a low-LL culture.

But rather than surrender to an adulthood where we feel forced to conform to limited LL 3 expectations, what if we could keep growing in LL throughout all the decades of our lives? Each higher LL is exponentially more life-changing and powerful than all the ones before, so what if we could just keep on growing, leap by leap? Breakthrough by breakthrough? What if we could always look forward and expect that ten years from now, our entire human nature might be a quantum or three different and better, on and on, with no end!

Suddenly, the future would always be exciting, rather than daunting. Suddenly the world would seem both enormous and small in all the best ways, full of so much to explore while being so open to wherever we want to search. What might a culture accomplish, if most young adults were naturally and happily LL 4? And if most 50 year-olds were LL 6 or more? What would politics be like in such a culture? What astonishing inventions would be imagined, and how freely would they be manufactured and sold? How would economics, philosophy, and life itself work in such a world?

That kind of culture is a ways off, but what might a small mini-culture of such people accomplish? What might your life be like, if you never stopped growing on such a deep layer of who you are?

Of course LL 4 has its negative sides, and they can be quite dangerous, but those weaknesses are insignificant compared with the life-stopping poison of LL 3. And once people get at Home in LL 4, then they’ll be sure to keep growing forever after. LL 4 is the big aim, the purpose of pretty much everything we’re going to talk about here on Phase 2.